

SFChronicle

The Character to 'Stand Tall'

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Nixon Talks of Lincoln's Vilification

Washington

President Nixon placed a wreath at the Lincoln Memorial yesterday and said in a speech that despite vilification Lincoln had the character to "stand tall and strong and firm no matter

how harsh or unfair the criticism might be."

Appearing unannounced at a small, quiet ceremony celebrating the 165th anniversary of Lincoln's birth, Mr. Nixon did not mention the torrent of criticism that has

been heaped on him. He said of Lincoln:

"No president in history has been more vilified or was more vilified during the time he was President than Lincoln. Those who knew him, his secretaries, have written that he was very

deeply hurt by what was said about him and drawn about him, but on the other hand, Lincoln had the great strength of character never to display it, always to stand tall and strong and firm no matter how harsh or unfair the criticism might be. These elements of greatness, of course, inspired us all today."

The theme of his brief address, however, pertained to Lincoln's view of "America's role in the world," one that Mr. Nixon said would have approved of his own current efforts to bring about a peaceful world order.

"Lincoln would have said, a great nation, a strong nation, a rich nation and a great people will use their strength and their wealth to build a world in which peace and freedom can survive for themselves and for others as well," Mr. Nixon said.

"This, I think is the Lincoln heritage for today. It is the Lincoln admonition for tomorrow and I would trust for the next generation and perhaps for the next century."

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